


# Meteor

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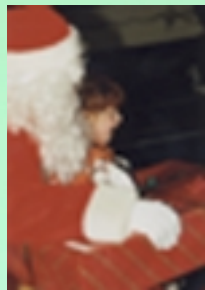
## Around USAG Benelux

SHAPE/Chièvres

### Christmas Orphans Program helps Santa

Just a couple of days are left if you would like to support the Christmas Orphans Program.

The program, led by the command chaplain, is in support of some 50 children in the Ath orphanage.



All children submitted their wishes for Christmas and the U.S. Army Garrison Benelux goal is to

provide one gift per child to be delivered at the orphanage on Dec. 21 in the afternoon.

For more information and to find out which gifts are still needed to make a Merry Christmas for those less fortunate children, contact the USAG Benelux Public Affairs Office at DSN 361-5694.

USAG Schinnen

### Folks Flock for tree lighting ceremony



PHOTO: Kent Garcia

An audience cheers during the lighting of the large Christmas tree during USAG Schinnen's tree-lighting ceremony held on Nov. 30.

## Rice visits NATO, Brussels

By Thad Moyseowicz

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was in Brussels for the annual end-of-year "informal" meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers.

Rice engaged in important consultations with the Foreign Ministers of the 26-nation Alliance. Among the results was NATO agreement to significantly expand the footprint of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan from its current level of 9,000 troops to up to 15,000.

The Ministers also discussed the gamut of strategic transatlantic political issues.

As she was departing NATO, Rice met with an audience of about 80 American military and civilian personnel assigned to various elements of the U.S. Representation to NATO and to the Benelux Army Community. Rice declared the Ministerial a great success, and complimented on-scene U.S. personnel who helped in making it happen.



PHOTO: Courtesy Carl W. Hale

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice praises the U.S. Mission and U.S. Military Delegation staff Dec. 8, after meeting NATO Foreign Ministers in Brussels.

## Force protection a team focus

By J.D. Hardesty

With the holiday season in full swing, force protection concerns remain at the forefront for service members, Department of the Army civilians and their families.

The clearest reminder came Dec. 6 when SHAPE International Police, U.S. Military Police and Belgian Federal Police responded to a call concerning a World War II grenade discovered in the grass near the Hotel Maisières in Casteau, Belgium, located near the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe entrance.

To ensure everyone's safety hotel guests were evacuated and traffic on the N6 in front of SHAPE was closed for a short time while the area was searched for other possible unexploded ordnance. No other ordnance was found. The Belgian EOD experts responded and removed the grenade.

The incident is under investigation.

"The process of responding to an emergency worked," said Lt. Col. John G. Romero, Chièvres Garrison commander. "Our MPs teamed with SHAPE International Police and Belgian Federal Police and the EOD experts to ensure everyone in the SHAPE community and passers-by were safe."

In a non-related incident, a force protection training aide was discovered in a government vehicle entering the U.S. Embassy area in Brussels. Again, force protection personnel teamed to ensure the safety of all tri-mission personnel, their families and the host nation community, as offices were evacuated and traffic closed. "These two incidents serve as a reminder to remain aware of force protection and crime prevention issues during the holidays," Romero said.

"Living overseas, we have to think about force protection and personal security as part of our way of life," said Brig. Gen. John Adams, deputy U.S. Military Representative to the NATO Military Committee, and community coordinator for the Brussels Military Community. "Terrorism is a global threat. There is always an underlying risk, but if we practice awareness and personal security as part of our daily business, we will be able to conduct our daily business more safely — with or without the threat of terror."

According to Adams, host nation and military police emergency responders partner force protection efforts together.

"Local police and fire departments and the military have built long-term, lasting relationships," Adams said. "These relationships haven't been built because of one incident; they were developed years ago. I have been impressed with what I've seen at USAG Brussels, USAG Schinnen and USAG Benelux, where the U.S. military leadership has built close ties with local community emergency responders."

Common sense iterates there is a relationship between force protection measures and crime prevention. "For example, we all need to beware of pickpockets when shopping, we need to have an eye for unusual events in our neighborhoods, and as parents, we need to help our children avoid risky situations," Adams said. "Don't take safety and security for granted."

Knowing force protection and crime prevention resources in your community is a good approach.

"Unfortunately, some people have criminal intent," he said. "Especially this time of year, if you leave your house for a vacation or long weekend, ask your neighbor to keep an eye on the house, or better yet, let your provost marshal know. He or she can provide good security advice. The provost marshal may also schedule an MP patrol to conduct spot checks in government housing areas, or ask local community police to check your property."

"Communication about safety and security is vital, whether up and down the chain-of-command, or with friends and co-workers," Adams said. "If you see something unsafe or threatening, take appropriate action and always let someone know about the situation. Moreover, it is vital to share lessons on safety and security."

A team of force protection works both ways.

While driving to Chièvres Air Base for early morning physical training, lieutenant colonels John Davidson and Scott Glass discovered a building on fire in Brugelette and called emergency responders. The building was damaged, but, according to Glass, equipment inside the building was saved.





# Former POW returns to site of capture

*'I survived only by courage and determination'*

By Tom Larscheid

CLERMONT, Belgium – James Forsythe, 82, sums up his experiences as a prisoner of war during the last months of World War II in two succinct sentences: "In prison I never had a change of clothes, a tooth brush or a bath in five months and 17 days. I survived only by courage and determination."

Forsythe's ordeal as a prisoner began in December 1944 in the heavily forested Ardennes-Eifel region along the Belgian-German border. His division, the 106th Infantry, the "Golden Lions," had recently arrived from the states and were immediately put into the front line replacing the combat-scarred 2nd Armored Division.

Although some American commanders were uneasy about putting an untried division spread thinly across the front line, they were told it was on a "quite front" where the troops could continue to hone their combat skills.

"We had only 40 rounds of ammunition each," Forsythe recalled. "We were more or less picnicking. We thought the war was over."

But the picnic ended on Dec. 16 when 2,000 German artillery pieces opened up simultaneously in the early morning cold and freezing fog. The Gold Lions were right in the middle of Hitler's last desperate offensive in the west.

"I particularly remember the artillery. The first shell that came in was a

whistler. I was a runner and my job was to take messages from the company commander to different squads. But there was no organization; we were so overwhelmed and pinned down. The ground was frozen and we couldn't even dig in. We hoped to find artillery holes to get in. We were just out in the open," he said.

Forsythe's company, 260 strong, quickly disintegrated in the sharp attacks by hordes of German shock troops backed by tanks.

"Most of our squad was killed within the first minutes of the battle," he said. "Five survivors including the company commander slipped into a root cellar and (we) spent most of the night listening to a continuous line of German tanks passing within 12 feet of our location. I heard hobnail boots all night long."

The next morning Forsythe's company commander bolted out the door hands held high yelling "Officer! Officer!" He told the Germans there were more Americans in the cellar.

"I suppose he wanted better circumstances," Forsythe said of the incident.

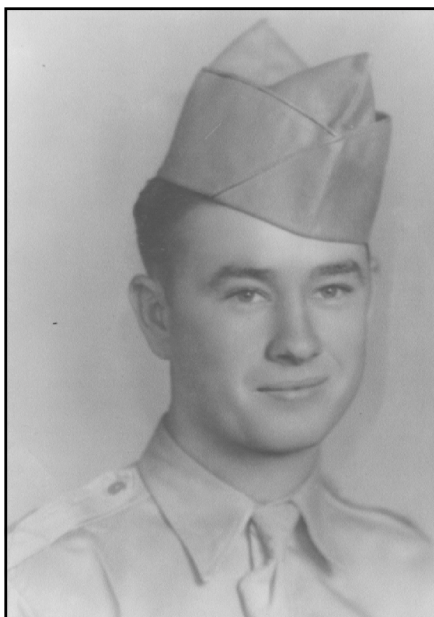


PHOTO: Courtesy James Forsythe

A 20-year-old James Forsythe became a prisoner of war in the Ardennes-Eifel region in December 1944. He recently returned to the site of his capture.

spent the night in the barn; a few attempted to escape and were shot."

On Dec. 18 the GIs began their march toward Germany. According to Forsythe, the wounded who could not walk were shot.

"I mentally suffered for many years after the war by remembering those young men begging to be allowed to live. And yes, most of them cried and called for their mothers. Possibly, if any of the German executioners survived the war, they too must have lived with the cries in their ears of those executed young men every time they tried to rest," he said.

"I thought of him as a traitor then but I have since learned that I should not judge what a person, even yourself, will do under life-threatening circumstances."

Forsythe and the others were searched by SS troops and marched to a barn where they joined about other 200 Americans.

"I found the SS to be very seasoned professional soldiers. Their rules became very simple, do exactly what they ordered you to do or get shot," he said. "We

Forsythe was interrogated on several occasions during the forced march. Some were low-key affairs while others attempted to extract information by screaming and threatening the prisoners. At one point Forsythe lost his combat boots, raincoat and overcoat.

"I gave up my combat boots and was supplied with wooden shoes. I was fortunate; most of the prisoners lost their boots and got no wooden shoes," he said.

As the column trudged on in the bitter cold, the German guards took what remained of their winter clothing, watches and jewelry.

The exhausted men had had no food or water since their capture three days earlier.

"They finally gave us some green soup made from dehydrated carrots and a half a slice of bread. The dehydrated carrots were used for horse feed and that's what we got," he recalled. "There is no better laxative in the world. So here we are, all with dysentery, packed into railroad cars with no water or toilet facilities."

For three days and nights the doors remained locked.

"When they finally took us off the train it was horrible. There was a lot of death. Most of the GIs were down on the floor wallowing in the filth," he said. "The ones that were alive were very sick. You couldn't avoid the stench."

Forsythe estimated that he moved through 13 prisoner camps during his captivity.

"We seemed to be more on the road than in prison camps. That was good for us because we were put on work details. Working for farmers was very

Continued on next page



## Meteor-Heraut Deadline and Publication Dates

Copy is due at noon

Deadline	Print Date	Deadline	Print Date	Deadline	Print Date	Deadline	Print Date
Jan. 3	Jan. 13	Jan. 20	Feb. 10	Feb. 27	Mar. 10	Mar. 27	Apr. 7
Jan. 16	Jan. 27	Feb. 13	Feb. 24	Mar. 13	Mar. 24	Apr. 10	Apr. 21

## About the Meteor-Heraut

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LaDonna Davis	Writer

popular. We'd get a bowl of soup, bread, jam and butter. They would give us a nice lunch and that fresh food saved my life," he said.

But disease and death continued to stalk the camps. Forsythe said many of the troops succumbed because of dysentery. "If the men with it didn't get up and move around, they were gone in a few days. I learned that charcoal was the best remedy for dysentery," he said. "Farmers would allow us to pick up leftover potatoes so we brought them back to camp and burned them until they were 75 percent charcoal. Then we'd eat them. We would steal anything that would help our situation too."

Red Cross parcels were delivered to the camps but seldom handed out by the guards. "When we did get them there would be one parcel for about 10 to 20 men," Forsythe said. "The Germans always punctured the cans with their bayonets so you had to consume it right now."

Forsythe escaped death one night during a British bombing raid on a nearby power plant.

"More damage was done to the stalag than to the power



PHOTO: Tom Larscheid

After 58 years in a drawer forgotten, Forsythe now carries his GI and German "dogtags" on a key ring as a reminder of his POW experiences plant. Many prisoners were killed. I remember the earth rolling from the concussions of the big bombs similar to swells on the ocean. I was on the floor one second and seconds later was thrown against the ceiling," he said.

During that bombing raid Forsythe's company commander, the man whom he thought surrendered too quickly, was killed.

"He was a young man too, just like the rest of us. When it comes to your personal life, you don't know how you would react either," he said. "I forgive him."

By the spring of 1945 the Allies were closing in on Nazi Ger-

many from all sides, but a steady stream of propaganda kept Forsythe and his fellow prisoners in the dark.

"Unfortunately the Germans were moving most of us prisoners away from the front to avoid having them recaptured. We were walking across Germany from east to west then from west to east most of the time.

"Most of us lost our morale. You didn't expect to live through tomorrow. We were brainwashed and were told of German secret weapons that cost us many divisions," he said. "We could see the V1 and V2 missiles flying to the west toward England."

Forsythe said only recent war news from a shot down American pilot who bailed out over their camp gave the prisoners hope their ordeal would soon come to an end.

By May 1945 the war was officially over but the prisoners were still deep inside enemy territory. "Our guards said we'd be wise to remain in camp so

we did and were liberated after the war," he said.

Forsythe took a slow boat home while recovering from his captivity. "I weighed 180 pounds going into the Army and came out weighing 108," he said. "Some of the American cooks actually cried at seeing the wretched condition of us ex-prisoners."

Forsythe soon recovered and was on his way home to Arkansas. "My parents went



PHOTO: Tom Larscheid

Forsythe with his daughter Deanna, came to Belgium to participate in ceremonies commemorating the 60th anniversary of the liberation of all German POW camps.

into a state of shock. All they knew was that I was missing in action. They didn't get any further news until I knocked on the front door," he said. "Forgive

me for not recognizing the mental anguish of my parents who drove me off to the county seat to catch the bus to go off to the war. When you're young and feeling invincible, you don't think of those left behind."

For 58 years Forsythe suppressed the horrors he experienced as a young infantryman.

"I got it out of my mind," he said. "I was successful and able to put it aside. It was just too gory to talk about and discuss with my family."

But the memories came flooding back three years ago after he tracked down through the internet a former foxhole buddy, Dwight Stokes, who was one of the few from the 106th Infantry Division who wasn't captured.

"After I found him, I came out of my shell. Now I'm going as fast as I can retracing my steps and, hopefully, have enough time to write my memoirs," he said.

Forsythe and his daughter, Deanna, came to Belgium to participate in ceremonies sponsored by the Remember Museum, Clermont, Belgium, commemorating the 60th anniversary of the liberation of all German POW camps.

# Advertisement





## Chièvres Garrison...serving SHAPE/Chièvres communities

### Chièvres kicks off Holiday Season



PHOTO: J.D. Hardesty

The Chièvres Garrison community gather at the Christmas tree lighting ceremony Dec. 2 on Chièvres Air Base. Besides Santa and Ms. Claus attendin the festivities, a holiday bazar was held in the Community Activity Center for early holiday shoppers.

### SHAPE Catholic community reaches 'outside the gate' to provide a helping hand



PHOTO: Courtesy of Chaplain's office

Pictured (from left) Sandrine Leroy, who works at St. Alfred, along with Kurt Barry, John Roa, Jennifer Howe.

With the hustle and bustle of the holiday season fast approaching, the English Speaking Catholic community at SHAPE has focused on the needs of those in the local community this Christmas season.

The object of this congregation's affection is St. Alfred's residential home for the mentally challenged in Casteau.

For 20-plus years the Catholic community at SHAPE has sponsored an annual dinner and gift event at the residential care facility. This year, on Dec. 2, the community continued its tradition of service to St. Alfred's.

Jennifer Howe, Catholic Parish coordinator, was the chief organizer this year. Howe organized members of the parish to donate dinner items for the event. She also coordinated with the facility to ensure all residents received the gift they desired, donated by members of the SHAPE Catholic community.

Howe said, "This event is such a great outreach to those in need outside the gates of SHAPE."

The event was designed to be an act of service by the community to St. Alfred's. Congregational volunteers from the community prepared for the event, served dinner to the residents, cleaned, and passed out gifts.

Approximately 20 volunteers from the community were present for the event. According to Howe, teenagers comprised half of the volunteers. "All ages have the ability to make a difference in another person's life. These young adults did that by participating in the St. Alfred's dinner," she said.

## SHAPE International Basketball Tournament

By J.D. Hardesty

CASTEAU, Belgium - The unbeaten, Lithuania and Latvia, clashed at the SHAPE 42nd International Basketball Tournament Saturday at the SHAPE Main Gym with Latvia dominating Lithuania 84-63.

Coming into the game with identical 5-0 records, Latvia moved into the championship game with an 80-69 victory over the United States while Lithuania downed Italy 85-70 to earn its way into the title match of the eight-team tournament.

The United States and

Italy faced off for third place, each carrying a 3-2 record while Canada and Turkey battled for fifth place and Germany and Britain battled for seventh.

Their were several outstanding games, but the Lithuania-U.S.A. match was "the best game of the tournament," said Neil Howe, a British officer who served as the announcer for every game in the tournament.

Howe, who was never a basketball fan explained that "serving as the tournament's announcer the past two years has converted me to the sport."

In the consolation games,

the United States downed Italy 88-65 to take third place in the tournament; Turkey squeaked by Canada 66-64 to finish fifth and Germany beat Britain 74-57 to finish seventh.

#### Scores:

##### Dec. 5

Lithuania 70, Turkey 65  
Latvia 87, Germany 55  
Italy 77, Britain 56  
U.S.A. 103, Canada 42

##### Dec. 6

Latvia 100, Britain 47  
Turkey 80, Canada 44  
Lithuania 85, U.S.A. 84  
Italy 83, Germany 71

##### Dec. 7

Lithuania 68, Canada 55  
Latvia 107, Italy 61  
Britain 68, Germany 66  
U.S.A. 101, Turkey 62

Dec. 8  
U.S. 122, Britain 36  
Italy 68, Turkey 65  
Latvia 101, Canada 36  
Lithuania 83, Germany 68

##### Dec. 9

Canada 91, Britain 58  
Turkey 70, Germany 56  
Latvia 80, U.S.A. 69  
Lithuania 86, Italy 70

##### Dec. 10

Germany 74, Britain 57  
Turkey 66, Canada 64  
U.S.A. 88, Italy 65  
Latvia 84, Lithuania 63

U.S.A. lost to Lithuania Dec. 6 in the second game of the tournament. Latvia won the SHAPE 42nd Annual International Basketball Tournament championship with a 84-63 win over Lithuania.



PHOTO: Courtesy SHAPE Athletics



## USAG Schinnen...serving the tri-border community

# ‘Community of Choice’ hosts town hall

By LaDonna Davis

Issues regarding U.S. Army Garrison Schinnen's directorate of public works construction projects, AAFES school lunch payment program, communicating in the area were all addressed Dec. 7, during the garrison's quarterly town hall meeting.

Community and service members attended the "Your Community of Choice," town hall meeting to address the community's issues and concerns.

"The town hall meetings give the community an opportunity to hear what's going on straight from the garrison commander and to hear information from subject matter experts as well as provide feedback to the garrison," said Lt. Col. Rick Richardson, USAG Schinnen commander.

One of the main focuses of the meeting was the on going construction projects around the garrison.

The goal of the construction projects is to provide a "quality base with quality support," said Richardson.

The construction projects include:

1) Expanding the current fuel station with an AAFES shoppette to provide longer hours and more convenience to the community (scheduled to open in May).

2) Adding a new engagement skills trainer center designed to allow soldiers simulated weapons training in a high-tech environment (opening in



PHOTO: LaDonna Davis

Attendees of the USAG-Schinnen's town hall meeting listen as Lt. Col. Rick Richardson gives an update on projects affecting the Schinnen area.

March).

3) A redesigned fitness center (scheduled for completion in January).

4) A new bookmark and coffee house project (set to open in February).

In addition to the construction projects, Schinnen is also receiving a landscaping makeover to link buildings like the commissary, bank and shoppette all on one pedestrian walkway. New parking lots are being built to improve traffic flow, and increase installation parking space.

An explanation of the new AAFES

school lunch payment program was also discussed during the town hall meeting.

The new lunch program replaced the old meal ticket program so parents can have more control over their children's lunching habits and as a new way parents can buy their children's lunch in a more "easier and more convenient manner," said Kevin Williams, Schinnen's food court manager.

The new lunch program works like a debit card where parents setting up an account with the school cashier and

then decide the amount of money they want to put in their child's account, the spending limit the child has, the types of à la carte items the child can buy on certain days (i.e. allowing a child to only purchase fries on Mon. and Tue.) and whether or not they want their child to charge money to their account when there is not enough cash available.

The new program also allows parents to receive a refund for any remaining balance left on the card after the account is closed out and gives the cashier the ability to see when a child's account is running low so that children can tell their parents.

The town hall also served as a reminder to the community about the many means of communication Schinnen has to offer.

The two most accessible means of communication are the Meteor-Heraut newspaper and the Benelux Link magazine. Both can be found on the bookshelves of the PX, commissary, and headquarters and are mailed to every unit in the tri-border area.

Other ways people can find out about what's going on in the Schinnen area include the radio, community calendar, town hall meetings, commanders e-mails, the Dutch language newsletter, and the internet ([www.usagschinnen.eur.army.mil](http://www.usagschinnen.eur.army.mil)).

The next USAG Schinnen town hall meeting is scheduled for March 1.

## ACS program recognizes contributors

By LaDonna Davis

The U.S. Army Garrison Schinnen unveiled its accreditation certificate from Headquarters, Department of Army Dec. 8, in an open house ceremony, and recognized the directorates and agencies who contributed to the accreditation of the Army Community Service.

The DA accreditation recognizes ACS centers having a high level of performance, integrity, and quality to ensure soldiers, civilians and families receive consistent levels of quality support.

"This is the first time I've been a part of an organization as it's gotten accredited. It makes me feel good," said Master Sgt. Leroy Lee, noncommissioned officer-in-charge of Directorate, Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security office, who received a plaque for his offices' contributions.

"I'm very proud of the staff that helped us get to this point. They all worked really hard," said Raquel Cajudo, director of Schinnen's ACS program. "We feel more professional because accreditation means that the quality of standard has been achieved."

Eleven directorates and agencies combined to provide assistance and technical



PHOTO: LaDonna Davis

Master Sgt. Leroy Lee (center) accepts a plaque from Maj. Gen Gary Harrell (right), and Lt. Col Rick Richardson for the Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security's contribution to ACS.

support to the program.

The accreditation process began in February 2004 when five program managers from the Installation Management Agency-Europe evaluated Schinnen's ACS overall compliance with accreditation standards.

The final inspection took place on March 30, and the ACS program received accreditation in June.

"By achieving accreditation, we can give assurance that if a family comes in here, they will receive the same quality of service that they would if they moved from one accredited center to another," said Cajudo.

## Breakfast with Santa

Young children and their parents had an early Christmas visit from Santa Claus when he made his way to Schinnen's bowling alley Dec. 3, for a meet and greet breakfast.

"The event is held so the kids can have more personal time with Santa in a relaxed atmosphere with their families and enjoy breakfast at the same time," said Ray Landrau, Schinnen's sport director.

Boys and girls got a chance to sit on Santa's lap and tell him what's on their Christmas wish list, as well as tell him if they've been naughty or nice.

Afterwards, a hot pancake breakfast was served and children, along with their friends and family, had the chance to enjoy a few rounds of bowling.

"The food was really good, and the kids had a good time, you could see them smiling when Santa came out, along with the grown-ups too" said Ada Cota, one of the many people who came out to join in the festivities.

Each child was given a goody bag by Santa's helpers filled with candies and toys to take home and enjoy.



PHOTO: LaDonna Davis

Young boys and girls gathered around to see Santa Claus and his little helpers during the Santa breakfast held at USAG Schinnen Bowling Center Dec. 3.



**USAG Brussels...serving the tri-mission community**

## USAG Benelux team supports NATO's Distinguished visitors

By Thad Moyseowicz

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice recently visited NATO Headquarters in Brussels for the annual end-of-year meeting of the Alliance's 26 Foreign Ministers, during which the Ministers took stock of the many policy issues facing NATO and help chart the political direction the Alliance will take.

The NATO alliance remains a core component of the United States' National Defense Strategy. As Rice said in Brussels, "NATO is truly a multilateral organization that is vibrant, that is a contributor to global security."

Whether located in Brussels, Mons/Chièvres or Schinnen, collective USAG Benelux efforts are oriented toward supporting U.S. representation NATO elements - NATO Headquarters, Supreme Allied Powers Europe and JFC Brunssum. Most of this representation is permanent, however, frequent support is required for distinguished U.S. visitors such as the secretary of state visiting the region.

Brussels, as both the location of the NATO Headquarters and the regional air hub, draws an average of 5,000 to 6,000 U.S. distinguished visitors (DVs) per year on NATO business. These figures include such principals as the president of the United States to U.S. cabi-

net secretaries and congressional delegations to U.S. general and flag officers from the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, their staffs, and the U.S. aircrew who man the airlift missions assigned to transport the distinguished visitors.

USAG-Brussels executes the Brussels DV Support Program on behalf of USAG-Benelux. Program support is organized into two mutually supporting elements. The protocol office, headed by Mike De Ryck, is physically located in the Brussels International Airport. De Ryck and his three Belgian assistants are literally at the "tip of the spear" of this program. They make the behind-the-scenes arrangements to ensure that U.S. DVs and their staffs are processed effortlessly through Belgian immigration and customs procedures. They also assist in such small details as making hotel and transportation arrangements not only for the DVs, but also for their aircrew.

Ground transportation for the DVs while in Brussels is a particularly important element of the DV Support Program. This mission is handled by USAG-Brussels Transportation Officer, Leon Lee. Lee, a British citizen and long-time resident of the Benelux (he was previously employed at SHAPE for 27 years) runs a large motor pool dedicated to the mission. He currently has 12 drivers as-



PHOTO: Carl W. Hale

Three people from the tri-mission community are photographed with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and members of the USAG Benelux who provided support for the secretary's visit to NATO. Pictured (from left) are Staff Sgt. David Clark, USAG Schinnen, Spec. Antonio Gibbs from USAG Benelux, Sgt. Brian Karst from the 128th Signal Company, 39th Signal Battalion, Rice, Staff Sgt. Paul Holms, USAG Brussels and Sandra Payton and Sgt. 1st Class Victor Brooks from the U.S. Mission to NATO.

signed to his pool.

"Needless to say," explains Lee, "our drivers must be of the very highest quality. Not only do they need to know the street geography of Brussels and the surrounding area cold, but the high-visibility of their DV mission demands they be able to think on their feet."

"Our drivers are proud of their mission, and are constantly striving for perfection. Since our driver pool is very stable, and since many of our DVs end up making multiple trips to Brussels in the course of years, it's not uncommon that we get 'by name' requests for a par-

ticular driver from a particular DV."

June and December tend to be particularly busy months in the DV support business. High-visibility meetings involving NATO Defense and Foreign Ministers, as well as defense chiefs, are typically held during those months. "The higher the rank of the DV, the larger the delegation we support," says Lee. In such cases, USAG-Brussels requests support from our sister garrisons to properly support the DV party. In fact, we could not do it without the three garrisons and their tenant commands coming together to support the mission."

## Brussels freshmen raise money for Hurricane Katrina relief

By Thad Moyseowicz

Hurricane Katrina was a cataclysmic, headline-grabbing event in the United States that received extensive media coverage throughout the world. The scale of the devastation, plus the fact that the calamity happened in the United States, shocked many in Brussels American School (BAS) freshman class.

The class decided to try and make a difference.

Class Vice-President Kaitlyn Oppenheim came up with the idea of staging a fund-raiser with proceeds going directly to Hurricane Katrina relief. Class president Kara Murray strongly supported the concept, and agreed to help organize their classmates.

It was agreed that "traditional" forms of fundraising (such as bake sales, and the like) would not generate funds rapidly enough in response to the immediate needs of the disaster. Oppenheim had previously heard of "car smashes" being conducted for charity. She also knew of a family that was seeking to dispose of a worn-out BMW automobile. She explained the idea seemed neat - charging people for the privilege of taking a sledgehammer to a prestige marque such as a "Beamer" while indulging an atavistic desire to "smash" things. Thus was born the idea.

But ideas, however good, require a good deal of legwork and attention to detail. Where to hold the event? When could a large audience be expected? What about safety considerations? Finally, what to do with the smashed car once it had been reduced to a hulk?



PHOTO: Courtesy Kris Oppenheim

Cathy Lewis, Brussels AFCU branch manager (left), and Kaitlyn Oppenheim, Brussels American School freshmen vice-president, and several of her classmates hold up a 1,600 check representing the Class' fund-raising efforts to help Hurricane Katrina relief.

Cathy Lewis, manager of Andrews Federal Credit Union's Brussels branch had heard of this possible fund raising initiative, and tabled an offer to the ninth graders Andrews would match any funds they raised for Katrina relief.

The students decided that the best venue for the car "smash-up" would be at the Brussels American School campus. The students decided to time their event over a weekend that promised a large turnout potential car-smashers, namely, the Saturday of the

BAS Homecoming football game and the Sunday of the Community Brocante. BAS Principal Dr. Debby Barry was briefed as to the project's "concept of operations" and her permission was obtained. Marc van den Boomgaard, manager of the USAG-Brussels auto hobby shop, was able to assist in lining up a local firm that would provide discounted vehicle removal services. The freshmen joined together in coming up with both a local publicity plan and a safety program to ensure that "smashing" was a safety non-event.

The detailed planning all came together, and the Class was able to raise well over \$800 from among numerous members of the community who could not pass up the opportunity to take a whack at a BMW. After deducting disposal costs, the class was able to show Lewis \$800 in funds raised, which, per agreement, AFCU matched. The total of \$1,600 raised was donated to the American Red Cross- Katrina Relief fund.

"I'm really proud of these kids," says a parent of one of the ninth graders involved. "We are so fortunate here in Brussels. We enjoy a very high quality of life - and our kids know it. I think the students were really shocked by the news reports and they really felt bad for those who had lost everything. It was a pleasure supporting the kids in the car smash. Quite apart from learning important lessons in how to organize and leadership, they learned how to make a tangible difference."



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